



## **ACCET Document 5 – Guidance for the Utilization of External Consultants in the Accreditation Process**

The following guidelines are provided to assist an institution undergoing the process of ACCET accreditation to understand the perspective of the Accrediting Commission regarding the utilization of external consultants in the accreditation process.

Accreditation is a self-evaluation process requiring the institution, in collaboration with its faculty and staff, to conduct an internal review to analyze and verify that the institution is accomplishing its stated mission and objectives according to the established policies and procedures of the institution and applicable state, federal, and accrediting agencies. The process is designed to assist the faculty and staff to develop the knowledge and skills to enable them to continuously maintain and monitor quality throughout the institution.

During the process of becoming accredited, an institution must demonstrate that its faculty and staff have an embedded, broadly-based knowledge of ACCET standards, policies, and procedures and that the institution offers quality programs and services to its students in accordance with these requirements, whether or not the institution uses a consultant. The institution must show that these capabilities are intrinsic characteristics of the organization and its personnel, independent of any external consultant. Therefore, all communications between an institution and ACCET must be with the primary contact person at the institution and not with a consultant.

If an institution chooses to use a consultant for accreditation purposes, the consultant must not be present at the institution and/or participate during any part of the on-site or virtual evaluation team visit, and the evaluation team will communicate only directly with the management and employees of the institution.

ACCET does not recommend specific individuals or consulting firms to any institution seeking external assistance.